

DAILY BULLETIN

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U.S. OFFICIAL CALLS FOR RECOMMITMENT TO AIDS RESEARCH

Research holds promise for new and better medicine, Fauci says

The U.S. government's top AIDS researcher calls for a recommitment to every effort domestically and internationally to find better medicines and a vaccine aimed at ending the AIDS pandemic.

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, issued a statement in recognition of World AIDS Day December 1. It is a day to remember the dead, he said, and to renew the search for "accessible and affordable drugs to treat HIV disease and associated infections, and to develop topical microbicides, vaccines and other tools to prevent HIV infection."

Fauci pointedly mentioned microbicides in view of the theme of AIDS Day 2004, women, girls, HIV and AIDS. Researchers have been looking for years for a compound that women could use topically before intercourse to allow them greater control than condoms over their own protection from exposure to the HIV virus.

Fauci said new promising candidates for topical microbicides are in the research pipeline. The United States will spend an estimated \$70 million on this line of research in 2005.

The text of Fauci's statement follows:

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institutes of Health
[Bethesda, Maryland]
November 30, 2004
Statement of Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Director,

On World AIDS Day, December 1, 2004

Today, December 1, is World AIDS Day, a time to pause and remember all who have died from HIV/AIDS and reflect on the devastation this disease has caused around the world. It also is a day to recommit ourselves to doing all we can to develop accessible and affordable drugs to treat HIV disease and associated infections, and to develop topical microbicides, vaccines and other tools to prevent HIV infection. World AIDS Day also gives us an opportunity to thank those who have worked so hard to stop HIV/AIDS: our prevention workers, treatment advocates, clinicians, researchers, religious leaders and, importantly, those who have volunteered for the clinical trials that are essential for developing new interventions against HIV/AIDS.

This year's World AIDS Day theme could not be more appropriate: "Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS." Women are disproportionately affected by the epidemic: they comprise just under half of the estimated 39.4 million people living with HIV/AIDS, including close to 60 percent of those living with HIV/AIDS in resource-limited Sub-Saharan Africa. Worldwide, the vast majority of women with HIV/AIDS became infected via heterosexual intercourse, frequently in settings where saying no to sex or insisting on condom use is not an option because of cultural factors, lack of financial independence and even the threat of violence.

In the United States, the proportion of all AIDS cases reported among adolescent and adult women has risen dramatically, from 6 percent in 1985 to 26 percent in 2002. Minority women, especially African Americans, are disproportionately represented in these alarming statistics. Of all AIDS cases reported in women in 2002 in the USA, fully two-thirds were among African Americans.

Of course, these numbers do not tell the full story: the scourge of HIV/AIDS in women cripples families, creates orphans, and impairs the economic and social foundation of communities and nations.

To stop the disturbing trend of an increasingly female HIV/AIDS pandemic, new ways of thinking are needed. Women must be empowered so that they are able to control their own lives and in particular their sexual relations. Toward that end, increased educational and employment opportunities for girls and women are essential, including gender-based AIDS education and societal campaigns that delineate the harmful effects of inequality in gender relations.

On the research front, National Institutes of Health (NIH)-supported researchers and their colleagues around the world are studying the mechanisms of HIV infection and the course of HIV/AIDS in women in order to devise new interventions. Promising research includes the development and testing of new candidates to be used as topical microbicides. It is hoped that when used prior to sexual intercourse, these agents would help protect women from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. NIH supports a full spectrum of topical microbicide research, from basic research to clinical evaluation, with the goal of developing a potentially lifesaving tool. NIH funding for topical microbicide research rose from \$47 million in fiscal year 2001 to an estimated \$70 million in fiscal year 2005.

NIH is committed to working with our many collaborators--pharmaceutical companies, universities, foreign governments and others across the world--to develop safe, effective and affordable drugs, microbicides and vaccines. To accomplish these goals, however, we must test products in clinical trials, and to conduct such trials we must have volunteers, especially in those populations hardest hit by the pandemic. I encourage anyone concerned about the HIV/AIDS pandemic to learn more about ongoing research and to ask themselves how they can help end the AIDS crisis. For example, healthy HIV-negative individuals are needed as participants in HIV preventive vaccine trials in many cities across the United States; people can find out more by calling 1-800-HIV-0440 (outside of the United States, 1-301-519-0459) or visiting <http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov/> on the World Wide Web.

We are at a pivotal juncture in history, one where many HIV-infected individuals are dying and HIV infection is still spreading, in spite of our better understanding of the virus and its effects on the human body. On World AIDS Day, we must collectively reaffirm our commitment to do all that is possible domestically and internationally to develop new and improved medications, topical microbicides and a preventive vaccine, and ultimately to deliver

them to those who need them most. Today, let us also continue to honor those who have died from HIV/AIDS and use their memory to lead our efforts to end the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Dr. Fauci is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

Media inquiries can be directed to the NIAID Office of Communications and Public Liaison at 301-402-1663.

NIAID is a component of the National Institutes of Health, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIAID supports basic and applied research to prevent, diagnose and treat infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, influenza, tuberculosis, malaria and illness from potential agents of bioterrorism. NIAID also supports research on transplantation and immune-related illnesses, including autoimmune disorders, asthma and allergies.

News releases, fact sheets and other NIAID-related materials are available on the NIAID Web site at: <http://www.niaid.nih.gov>.

U.S. ISSUES GRANTS TO TRAIN INTERNATIONAL AIDS RESEARCHERS

Scientists in China, Haiti, Russia, and Uganda will get support

The United States is issuing \$12 million in international grants to help build greater medical research and training capabilities in China, Haiti, Russia and Uganda as part of a larger U.S. campaign against the AIDS pandemic.

The announcement was made November 30 by the Fogarty International Center (FIC), the division of the National Institutes of Health engaged in international research collaboration.

"These first four sites will provide critically needed training in the design and conduct of AIDS and TB research to scale-up promising interventions as they are brought into health care systems," said Sharon Hryn timer, FIC acting director in a press release.

The text of the FIC press release follows:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health
NIH News
Fogarty International Center (FIC)
<http://www.fic.nih.gov/>
Tuesday, November 30, 2004

Fogarty International Center Announces Research Training Grants to Tackle Aids and Tuberculosis

The Fogarty International Center (FIC), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), today announced the funding of institutions in China, Haiti, Russia and Uganda along with partner institutions in the United States in the first four comprehensive awards of the International Clinical, Operational, and Health Services Research Training Award Program for AIDS and Tuberculosis (ICOHRTA-AIDS/TB).

FIC, with co-sponsorship from nine NIH institutes and centers, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will commit approximately \$12 million over the first five years of the program.

"AIDS is a priority for all of NIH and the Department of Health and Human Services. Fogarty's success in forging international collaborations between foreign and U.S. institutions to help train researchers in developing countries is a key part of our fight against this terrible disease," noted Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D., NIH Director.

This innovative program supports collaborative and multidisciplinary research training in developing countries where AIDS and tuberculosis are taking an enormous toll on individuals, families and communities. It provides opportunities for health professionals to train at the Masters, Ph.D., and post-doctoral levels while working on research projects related to HIV/AIDS and TB that are relevant to their country's needs.

"This program will play an important role in meeting the training needs in countries struggling to gain control of the scourge of AIDS," said Sharon Hryn timer, Ph.D., FIC Acting Director, speaking on behalf of all the program sponsors. "These first four sites will provide critically needed training in the design and conduct of AIDS and TB research to scale-up promising interventions as they are brought into health care systems."

The four projects and their awardees are:

-- Dr. Zunyon Wu of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Beijing, China, will collaborate with Dr. Roger Detels of the University of California, Los Angeles, to implement a research training program that addresses the HIV/AIDS epidemic in China. The project will set up an independent HIV/AIDS training center at the Chinese CDC. The center will assist other academic and research institutions in China in training health professionals and researchers to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

-- Dr. Jean Pape of the Groupe Haitien d'Etude du Sarcome de Kaposi et des Infections Opportunistes (GHESKIO) will collaborate with Dr. Warren Johnson of Cornell University to build upon HIV prevention and care services in Haiti. The project involves training a cadre of research leaders while increasing research capacity of the National HIV Care and Prevention Network. This network, made up of public and private health care organizations in Haiti, will provide a standardized package of HIV care and prevention services to 300,000 people annually.

-- Dr. Andrei P. Kozlov of The Biomedical Center in St. Petersburg, Russia will work with Dr. Robert Heimer of Yale University. The team will develop a center of excellence, called the TB-AIDS Clinical Training and Research Unit, in St. Petersburg, Russia. This center will help train a new generation of medical scientists to respond to the emerging epidemics of TB and AIDS in Russia.

-- Dr. Peter Mugenyi of the Joint Clinical Research Centre in Kampala, Uganda will work with Dr. Christopher Whalen of Case Western Reserve University. The project will broaden national capacity to meet the public health and scientific challenges of the evolving HIV and TB epidemic in Uganda. Infrastructure will be developed in Uganda to translate basic and clinical research findings into public health policy and interventions and to evaluate their effectiveness.

FIC developed ICOHRTA-AIDS/TB in collaboration with NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Cancer Institute, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institute

of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Office of AIDS Research, and Office of Research on Women's Health, USAID and CDC.

The ICOHRTA-AIDS/TB complements the international research, research training, and prevention efforts of FIC and its co-sponsors. It reinforces FIC's AIDS International Training and Research Program, which has, over the past 15 years, built research capacity in the developing world by providing HIV/AIDS-related biomedical and behavioral research training to scientists and health professionals from developing countries. Also, ICOHRTA-AIDS/TB complements NIAID's Comprehensive International Program for Research on AIDS, the NIMH Collaborative HIV/STD Prevention Trial, the NICHD Partnerships Program, and the Global AIDS Program of the CDC.

FIC is the international component of the NIH. It supports and advances the NIH mission through international partnerships and addresses global health challenges through innovative and collaborative research and training programs. NIH is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Press releases and other FIC-related materials are available at .

This NIH News Release is available online at:
<http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/nov2004/fic-30.htm>

WHITE HOUSE REPORT, NOVEMBER 30: DETAINEES, UKRAINE, RIDGE

Guantanamo detainee treatment called consistent with Geneva Conventions

Accusations of Abuse at Guantanamo Rejected

The White House says it has "every reason to believe" that its military commanders are treating detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, humanely and in a manner consistent with the Geneva Conventions, as directed by President Bush.

Speaking to the press November 30, McClellan said administration officials "strongly disagree" with any characterization that suggests or implies that detainees

are being treated in a manner that is “inconsistent with the policy that the President outlined.”

According to press reports, the International Committee of the Red Cross has made accusations that detainees were abused at the Guantanamo facility.

“We are always in close contact with the Department of Defense on issues brought to our attention by the International Committee for the Red Cross,” McClellan said. “And we want to make sure the Department of Defense is acting and following through on those issues that are raised.”

The press secretary described the detainees as “enemy combatants who were seeking to do harm to America, or plotting to carry out attacks against Americans,” but he said the United States is “a nation of values and laws and we act according to our values and laws.”

Bush Welcomes Polish President’s Efforts in Ukraine

President Bush thanked Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski for his efforts to help encourage a peaceful solution to the political crisis in Ukraine.

Speaking with Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin in Ottawa, Bush said he spoke with the Polish leader earlier November 30 as Kwasniewski was preparing to lead a delegation to Kiev to encourage Ukraine’s political parties to reject violence and engage in dialogue.

“I tried to encourage him to continue to play a constructive and useful role. And hopefully this issue will be solved quickly, and the will of the [Ukrainian] people will be known,” Bush said.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge Resigns

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge announced his resignation November 30, expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to serve the country and lauding the department for its accomplishments in making the country more secure. Ridge intends to serve until February 1, 2005, unless the Senate confirms his successor before then.

Ridge was the first to hold the Cabinet post as head of the Department of Homeland Security, established in January 2003.

“The president has given me an extraordinary opportunity to serve my country in this incredible period since September 11th, 2001. I will always be grateful for his call to service,” Ridge said.

UNITED STATES RE-ESTABLISHES COMMISSION TO UNESCO

Action comes after U.S. re-entry into U.N.’s educational, cultural body

The U.S. Department of State announced November 29 the re-establishment of the U.S. National Commission for the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The commission, with expert members from education and cultural organizations, will provide advice to U.S. officials in their dealings with UNESCO.

After an almost 20 year absence from UNESCO, the United States rejoined the Paris-based organization in October 2003.

The text of a media note on the commission follows:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
For Immediate Release
November 29, 2004

U.S. National Commission for UNESCO Re-Established

In support of the United States’ reentry into the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the U.S. Department of State re-established the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO on October 20, 2004.

The National Commission will function as a Federal Advisory Committee, providing expert advice to the U.S. Government on matters relating to UNESCO. It will also function as a liaison with organizations, institutions, and individuals in the United States interested in the work of UNESCO.

The National Commission, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is comprised of representatives from various non-governmental organizations interested in matters of education, science, culture, and communications. The Commission also includes at-large individuals and state, local, and federal government representatives.

Further information about the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, including the list of Commission members appointed by Secretary of State Colin Powell, can be found at the Commission's new Web site:
<http://www.state.gov/p/io/unesco/>.

UNITED STATES TO PLAY SUPPORTING ROLE IN FORUM FOR THE FUTURE

Forum supports economic, political, social
reforms in Mideast, North Africa

By David Shelby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States looks forward to playing a supporting role in the inaugural meeting of the Forum for the Future in Rabat, Morocco, according to Under Secretary of State Alan Larson.

"The only objective that we have is to support initiatives from within the region, to promote more opportunity, to encourage reform and to take steps that will help create a better future for the people that live in the Middle East," Larson told reporters during a November 29 videoconference.

Both Larson and Moroccan Ambassador Yusuf Amrani pointed to the declaration that emerged from the Arab League Summit in Tunisia in May as evidence that the countries of the region are committed to pursuing political, economic and social reforms.

The Group of Eight countries -- Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States and Russia -- called for the establishment of the Forum for the Future during their Sea Island Summit in June in order to provide support for the countries of the broader Middle East and North Africa in their reform efforts. Morocco volunteered to sponsor the first gathering of the

forum in Rabat on December 11.

The forum will provide an opportunity for government officials, business leaders and civil society representatives from the region and the G8 countries to discuss initiatives aimed at improving the economic climate, the political systems, the judicial institutions and the educational opportunities for people in the region.

As Amrani explained, "The Forum is a space of dialogue for an exchange of ideas, an exchange of experiences. It's not an international organization to implement resolutions and so on It is open and nothing is imposed."

The Moroccan ambassador said that several of the member countries are preparing initiatives to discuss at the meeting in Rabat.

These include a literacy initiative prepared by Algeria and Afghanistan, an investment task force prepared by Jordan, a financial network program prepared by Bahrain, a democracy assistance dialogue prepared by Turkey and Yemen, a microfinance initiative prepared by Jordan and Yemen and an entrepreneurship training program prepared by Morocco and Bahrain.

Amrani said that the various initiatives demonstrate that the countries of the region are not only committed to the idea of reform but are anxious to bring constructive ideas to the table.

In addition to the ministerial meetings, where these various initiatives will be discussed, the forum includes roundtables for business leaders and civil society groups. Both Larson and Amrani underscored the importance of participation from all sectors of the business community and civil society to ensure that the reform programs undertaken are appropriate and effective.

"We need imaginative solutions to our problems," Amrani said, adding that broad participation could help generate useful proposals.

Larson added that the business roundtable would include representatives from both small and large businesses. He said that the civil society roundtable includes nongovernmental organizations dealing with democracy, human rights, press freedom and governance.

The under secretary noted that many of the countries in the region are already engaged in reform projects in partnership with G8 countries. He said that the forum would

provide the countries with a framework to study their various experiences and discuss the types of initiatives that might be effective in their own particular situations.

Larson said that the forum could have a positive impact on the entire region. "We think that where there is greater opportunity and greater freedom, that there is also going to be greater hope, and that that will create benefits for cooperation including trade. It will also reduce the risk and the appeal of doctrines that are based on hopelessness and despair, and those doctrines include the doctrine of terrorism."

Pleases Note: Most texts and transcript mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage: www.usmission.ch

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